

## ***Monism and Pantheism***

PHIL 402: Seminar in the History of Modern Philosophy

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Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 10:00am – 10:45am, or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: [redacted]

### ***Overview***

This course is an exploration of the related themes of monism and pantheism. Monism has two meanings, and we will explore both. Monism can refer to one-substance metaphysics, as opposed to dualist, two-substance metaphysics. Monism can also mean that there is only one existing thing, with everything else less real or all apparently distinct things actually being connected. Pantheism is the view that God is not distinct from the world. This class is therefore primarily interested in metaphysics, although one theme that we will explore is how these tendencies in metaphysics are connected to critiques of orthodox religious views, critical historical claims, and (for their time) radical politics. Our focus is on three figures from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries: Anne Conway, Benedict Spinoza, and John Toland. Our course will conclude with exploring these themes in other thinkers up through the twentieth century.

No previous experience in early modern philosophy is required or expected. Previous philosophy classes, especially ones that deal with pre-twentieth century texts or approach a philosopher's writing as a system, will be helpful.

### ***Course Goals***

1. Improve in one's ability to read difficult philosophical texts, understand them, and raise objections.
2. Develop familiarity with one or more systematic philosophical systems of the early modern period.
3. Increase awareness of how philosophers think and write in response to perceived problems.
4. Recognize the connections between arguments for metaphysical monism, religious heterodoxy, and revolutionary political views.
5. Become more proficient at writing arguments that are textually sensitive and philosophically sophisticated.

These learning goals include oral and written communication, critical thinking/analytical reasoning, and ethical reasoning, which are learning goals of classes that meet the General Education requirement of the College of Liberal Arts.

### ***Required Texts***

1. *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, by Anne Conway, edited by Coudert and Corse, ISBN: 9780521479042
  - a. OR you may use the Past Masters edition, edited by Peter Loftson, which is free through the university library: <http://umiss.lib.olemiss.edu/record=b6913537~S1>

2. *A Spinoza reader*, edited by Edwin Curley, ISBN: 9780691000671
  - a. the Past Masters edition (which is free through the university library) contains most of our Spinoza readings in the same translation, including the *Ethics* (however, page numbers will differ)
3. *Spinoza*, by Michael Della Rocca, ISBN: 9780415283304
4. *Letters to Serena*, by John Toland, edited by Ian Leask, ISBN: 9781846823954
  - a. this is the only modern edition of Toland's book; you can find digital scans of early print editions of this work, but it will not have the scholarly additions and page numbers will be different
5. additional readings online [redacted]

### **Grades**

The course grade will be determined by:

10%	Participation
10%	Reading Questions
70%	Seminar Paper
	Meetings with Writing Tutor – Required
	Paper Proposal, 5%
	Annotated Bibliography, 10%
	Paper Sketch, 5%
	Seminar Paper, 25%
	Revised Seminar Paper, 25%
10%	Final Exam

Following the guidelines employed by the University of Mississippi, an "A" in this class is reserved for excellent work, a "B" signifies good work, a "C" is for satisfactory work, a "D" is the lowest passing grade, and an "F" marks failure. This course will use the +/- system. There is no C-, D+, or D- grade. Students must receive a C or higher in the course for it to count toward the philosophy major or minor.

### **Assignments**

As a course focused on developing your writing skills, we will spend the early weeks of the course discussing and evaluating various kinds of arguments and rhetorical styles. From there, we will build toward each student writing a substantial, argument-driven research paper. The paper will be 15-25 pages and will argue for a significant philosophical thesis related to the course themes and readings. There are multiple steps to writing the paper, and these are formalized in the syllabus, as well as any additional requirements put forward by me as needed. These requirements include meeting with the writing tutor at least twice. You will turn in two editions of this paper. You must make substantial improvements in the revised version, based on the feedback you receive, to score well on the revised version. More details about the paper will be available as we near their respective due dates.

Reading questions are provided for each class period. You should turn in your answers via e-mail or in hard copy to Samantha Priest ([spriest@go.olemiss.edu](mailto:spriest@go.olemiss.edu)) no later than **one hour before** class begins. Questions will **not** be graded based on whether you get the answer exactly right. Instead, answers will be checked to make sure you made a sincere attempt to answer all the questions. You will receive 0, 1, or 2 points for each submission. The final score on the reading questions portion of the grade will be calculated out of 60 points. (You cannot receive more than 100% on this portion of the grade.)

The final exam will allow you the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of and engagement with the readings and ideas from our course. We will discuss details of the format near the end of the semester.

In addition to the assignments listed above, students are expected to engage in all in-class activities and complete all out-of-class assignments (including both the readings listed in the syllabus and *ad hoc* assignments for class). These will factor into participation.

### ***Attendance and Participation***

Active, respectful participation is required to do well in this course. Participation includes not only attendance but also coming to class prepared to discuss that day's material and contributing through the end of class. You are expected to bring to each class your ideas and questions for that day's discussion. You are not expected to understand completely the material before class, but you should come prepared to ask questions, seek clarifications, raise objections, and engage in philosophical discussion. Participation means not only being alert and ready to learn, but also participating in class discussions and asking questions.

In rare cases, excellent participation can raise one's grade. Poor participation (which includes sleeping in class, texting in class, arriving late to class, leaving early from class, not doing the assigned readings, distracting classmates, and rude or inappropriate behavior) will negatively affect one's grade. Students who disturb or distract others with their behavior will be asked to leave, and their attendance will be adjusted accordingly.

More than three absences and poor or infrequent contributions will result in a lower grade in the course. You should expect your grade to drop by 5% for each absence beyond three. Seven absences trigger an automatic F in the course, except in extraordinary circumstances, determined at the professor's discretion.

Scheduled absences: If you will be absent because you will be representing the university "in official competitions or performances" (as designated by university policy), you must contact me as soon as you know the dates so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

The university requires that all students have a verified attendance. If your attendance is not verified, then you may be dropped from the course, and any financial aid will be adjusted accordingly. For more information, please see <http://olemiss.edu/gotoclass>.

### ***Policies and Recommendations***

Accessibility: Please contact me as soon as possible if you need special accommodations. We will work with the University of Mississippi Disability Services office to individualize a plan.

Students should review and be aware of university policies on academic integrity, accessibility, appeals, computing and network use, classroom behavior, e-mail, and inclusive language. All university guidelines, including those relating to academic honesty, apply to this course. *Plagiarism will not be tolerated.* Plagiarized work will include a lower grade, possibly including failing the course. Please see the university handbook for details. If you have any questions or concerns about what constitutes plagiarism or proper citation, please contact me.

Please silence your cell phones and keep them put away for the entire class period. Failure to do so can lead to being removed from the class. If there are specific times when you may use your phone, I will let you know.

Laptops and tablets are allowed, but I reserve the right to ban them if they became distractions. If laptops are used for more than notetaking, it can negatively affect one's participation and hence one's grade.

Guns, large knives, and other weapons are not allowed in our classroom.

I strongly encourage all students to make use of our university resources as needed and before they are needed, including:

- Writing Center: Lamar Hall, Suite B & <http://rhetoric.olemiss.edu/writing-centers/> & 662-915-2121
- Student Health Services: first floor, Harrison & <http://healthcenter.olemiss.edu/> & 662-915-7274
- Counseling Center: 310 Lester Hall & <http://counseling.olemiss.edu/> & 662-915-3784
- Student Disability Services: 234 Martindale & <http://sds.olemiss.edu/> & 662-915-7128

### **Course Schedule**

#### **1. Matter, Infinity, and Our Place in the Universe: 1582-1664**

Wednesday, January 23	syllabus Cavendish, "Of Sense and Reason Exercised in their Different Shapes"
Friday, January 25	Bruno, <i>On the Infinite Universe and Worlds</i> , First Dialogue (250-270) Bruno, <i>The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast</i> , 1.1, 3.2 (excerpt) (89-102, 235-253) 1633 Indictment, Sentence, and Abjuration of Galileo
Monday, January 28	Descartes, <i>The World</i> (CSM1 81-98) Descartes, <i>Treatise on Man</i> (CSM1 99-108) Descartes, <i>Principles</i> 2.1-5 (CSM1 223-225) Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , Letter and Synopsis (CSM2 3-6, 9-11) Descartes to More, 5 February 1649 (CSM3 360-367)
Wednesday, January 30	Cavendish, <i>Philosophical Letters</i> , 2.20-2.22, 2.34, 4.28-4.33 Broad, <i>Women Philosophers of the 17th Century</i> , "Margaret Cavendish" (35-64)

#### **2. Anne Conway: 1671-1679 (1690)**

Friday, February 1	Conway, <i>Principles</i> , Prefaces & 1-2 (1-14/146-156) Hutton, <i>Anne Conway</i> , "Introduction" and "Legacy" (1-13, 220-243)
Monday, February 4	Conway, <i>Principles</i> 3-4 (15-22/157-166) Lascano, "Anne Conway on Liberty" (163-177)
Wednesday, February 6	Conway, <i>Principles</i> 5-6 (23-40/167-190) Coudert and Corse, "Introduction" (excerpt) (xviii-xxix)
Friday, February 8	[in-class] Broad, <i>Women Philosophers of the 17th Century</i> , "Anne Conway" (65-89)
Monday, February 11	Conway, <i>Principles</i> 7-8 (41-62/191-220) Lascano, "Anne Conway: Bodies in the Spiritual World"
Wednesday, February 13	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Introduction, Chapters 1-5 Conway, <i>Principles</i> 9 (63-70/221-230) Grey, "Conway's Ontological Objection to Cartesian Dualism"

Friday, February 15	Gordon-Roth, "What Kind of Monist Is Anne Finch Conway?"
	<b>3. Benedict Spinoza: 1656-1677</b>
Monday, February 18	Spinoza, <i>Tractatus Theologico-Politicus</i> , Preface, 4.1-21, 6.1-38, 7.1-14, 12 (65-76, 125-130, 152-160, 169-172, 248-256) Nadler, <i>A Book Forged in Hell</i> , 17-35, 215-240
Wednesday, February 20	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> 1, through 1p9 (85-90) Garrett, " <i>Ethics</i> 1p5: Shared Attributes and the Basis of Spinoza's Monism" (53-90)
Friday, February 22	<i>Paper Writing Session</i> Della Rocca, <i>Spinoza</i> 1
Monday, February 25	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> 1, through 1p16 (85-97) [yes, start again at the beginning] Spinoza and Tschirnhaus, "Objections and Replies," III-IV (269-272) Garrett, "Spinoza's 'Ontological' Argument" and "Postscript" (31-52)
Wednesday, February 27	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> 1, 1p17-1p36 (97-109) Della Rocca, <i>Spinoza</i> 2
Friday, March 1	<i>Paper Writing Session</i> Huenemann, <i>Spinoza's Radical Theology</i> , "God, as Known by Reason" (31-57) <b>PAPER PROPOSAL DUE</b>
Monday, March 4	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> 1.Appendix (109-115) Spinoza to Oldenburg, "The Worm in the Blood" (82-84) Spinoza and Tschirnhaus, "Objections and Replies," I-II, IX-XII (266-269, 274-276)
Wednesday, March 6	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> 2, through 2p12 (115-123) Melamed, <i>Spinoza's Metaphysics</i> , "Spinoza's Two Doctrines of Parallelism" Della Rocca, <i>Spinoza</i> 3
Friday, March 8	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> 2p13-49 (123-152) Spinoza and Tschirnhaus, "Objections and Replies," IX-XII (274-276) Peterman, "The Physical Interlude"
	<i>Spring Break</i>
Monday, March 18	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> 3 (152-197) Lord, <i>Spinoza's Ethics</i> , "The Affects" (83-93) Della Rocca, <i>Spinoza</i> 4
Wednesday, March 20	Descartes to Christina, 20 November 1647 (CSM3 324-326) Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> 4 (197-244) Della Rocca, <i>Spinoza</i> 5
Friday, March 22	Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> 5 (244-265) Nadler, "On Spinoza's 'Free Man'" Marshall, <i>The Spiritual Automaton</i> , "Blessedness, Salvation, & the Soul" (205-228) <b>ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE</b>

Monday, March 25 Della Rocca, *Spinoza* 6  
Huenemann, *Spinoza's Radical Theology*, "Spinoza's Republic" (109-130)

Wednesday, March 27 1: Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, "Spinoza" (271-341)  
2: Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God* (excerpts)  
(1-29, 35-38, 46-54)  
3: Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* 3, "Spinoza" (252-290)

#### **4. John Toland: 1696-1720**

Friday, March 29 Toland, *Christianity Not Mysterious* (excerpt)  
Toland, *Vindicus Liberius* 19-23 (84-103)  
Molyneux and Locke, correspondence (403-406, 421-435)  
Jacob, *The Newtonians and the English Revolution, 1689-1720* (excerpt) (205-250)  
**PAPER SKETCH DUE**

Monday, April 1 Leibniz, Sophie, and Sophie Charlotte, correspondence 51-59 (Strickland 257-301)

Wednesday, April 3 Toland, *Letters to Serena*, Preface and Letter 1 (49-72)  
Daniel, *John Toland: His Method, Manners, and Mind*, "The Tyranny of Custom..."

Friday, April 5 Toland, *Letters to Serena*, Letters 2-3 (73-114)  
Yenter, "The History of Philosophy as Philosophy: The Case of Toland"

Monday, April 8 Toland, *Letters to Serena*, Letter 4 (115-128)  
Vermij, "Matter and Motion: Toland and Spinoza"

Wednesday, April 10 Toland, *Letters to Serena*, Letter 5.1-15 (129-140)  
**SEMINAR PAPER DUE**

Friday, April 12 Toland, *Letters to Serena*, Letter 5.16-31 (140-160)  
1: Wotton, *A Letter to Eusebia* 26-39 (45-70)  
2: Leask, "Unholy Force"  
3: Duncan, "Toland, Leibniz, and Active Matter"

Monday, April 15 Toland, *Pantheisticon*

#### **5. Pantheism in Art, Theology, and Politics: 1667-1968**

Wednesday, April 17 Milton, *Paradise Lost* (excerpt)  
Fallon, *Milton Among the Philosophers*, 98-110, 118-123, 141-147

Friday, April 19 NO CLASS  
Gardiner, "'Be Ye as the Horse!'—Swift, Spinoza, and the Society of Virtuous Atheists" (229-253)

Monday, April 22 Edwards, *Of Being*  
Edwards, *The Mind* (excerpt)  
LoLordo, "Jonathan Edwards's Monism"

Wednesday, April 24 Fuller, "The One in All" (390-393)  
Emerson, "Nature" (161-188)  
Emerson, "The Over-Soul" (249-278)

Friday, April 26 Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*, various essays (8-15, 31-32, 36-54, 95-100, 106-107, 115-117, 151-158, 261-262, 356-359)

Monday, April 29 final exam preparation  
**REVISED SEMINAR PAPER DUE**

Wednesday, May 1 King, *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (excerpts) (17-32, 46-49)  
King, "The Personalism of J. M. E. McTaggart Under Criticism"  
King, "A Comparison of the Conceptions of God in the Thinking of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman" (excerpts) (507-517, 531-533)  
King, "Facing the Challenge of a New Age"

Friday, May 3 final exam preparation

Monday, May 6 (noon)  
**Final Exam**